Volume XCIX No. 17 February 1, 1974 50 cents

commonweal

Fiftieth Anniversary Year

PETER HEBBLETHWAITE

THE VATICAN

The contrast between reality and the rhetoric of Vatican Council II

BRITAIN IN CRISIS
BRIAN WICKER

THE NEW POWER-BROKERS
RUSSELL W. GIBBONS

THE GOLDWATER MYTH
PETER STEINFELS

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THE NEW ANTI-SEMITISM

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NEWS & VIEWS

An Old Story

An unhappy postscript to 40 years of official neglect of the quarterly *Liturgical Arts* and its esteemed editor, Maurice Lavanoux, is included in some diary notes circulating among 70 friends and associates of Lavanoux in this country and abroad.

The postscript concerns the Vatican decision to open a museum of modern art and place in it some 600 works of modern American artists. Lavanoux was on to the project 2½-years before it became public. He wrote to the Pope's private secretary, Msgr. Pasquale Macchi, and received a reply from Bishop Paul Marcinkus of the Curia telling him "that this was all *sub rosa*" and he should not write about it in *Liturgical Arts*.

At the time the request seemed logical to Lavanoux. So did his belief that the editor of a quarterly devoted to the arts, if not himself consulted on the art to be selected for the museum, would at least have a fair chance to make known to his readers that the Vatican was at last recognizing 20th-century art.

No such luck. Months passed, then one day there was the story in the *New York Times*, and the news that Lawrence A. Fleischman, of the Kennedy galleries, New York, had been "chosen as agent for the Vatican after two church officials from Rome found out at the Museum of Modern Art that he represented Ben Shahn." According to the *Times*, the two officials were Macchi and Marcinkus.

Lavanoux was wounded. The salt was rubbed in by the diocesan press.

First came a Brooklyn *Tablet* story noting that Cardinal Cooke—who wouldn't even see Lavanoux when he was seeking to elicit support for *Liturgical Arts*—is now president of the Committee of Religion and Art in America, with Fleischman as vice-president. No room for Lavanoux, nor for someone like Emily Bouchard, who has been involved in religion and art for many years.

Then came a *Catholic News* story, captioned "New York Priest Sees Pope Advancing Art World." Lavanoux finds it an irony that the spokesman of this piece should be the priest who "has zealously guarded the bastions of chancery secrecy concerning art," Msgr. Eugene V. Clark.

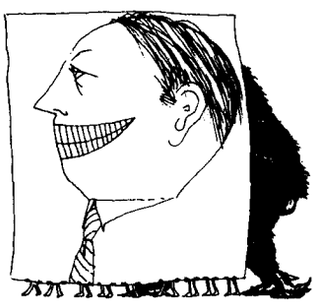
"To cap this fantasia," Lavanoux writes, "Msgr. Clark rates a membership in the New York-based Committee on Religion and Art in America."

But the cap itself was to be capped. On July 7, 1973 the mail brought a letter from Bishop Marcinkus in Rome counseling Lavanoux not to reprint their recent correspondence concerning the Vatican museum of modern art.

Lavanoux complied so far as his diaries are concerned; the letters are now in the archives of the University of Notre Dame, along with *Liturgical Arts'* correspondence and editorial accumulation of 40 years. *Liturgical Arts*, of course, bit the literary dust a year ago.

Lavanoux wraps the episode up with the comment:

"Why are Catholic sources slighted, here and in Rome? Why are those of us who have worked and slaved for decades for a modern and living religious art, the work of gifted but yet unknown artists, so crudely bypassed? Is it because we are expected to work for the 'honor and glory of God' and, of course, for a pittance? What cruel irony! In time, all this may be capsuled in an ecclesiastical Watergate caper, with evasive answers from all concerned. These days it is necessary to be securely anchored to the bark of Peter. The crew, at times, is a bit shaky!"



Working Papers
for a New Society/LNS

A New Concern

In an extremely sober front-page editorial, the *Manchester Guardian* worries about the proliferating SAM-7, British Blowpipe and American Redeye—portable, two-man missile weapons capable of bringing down an airliner within six miles of any major airport.

"The Big Powers who supply these weapons have a clear interest in keeping control of them," *The Guardian* comments. "The Russians were not in control of the Egyptian SAM-7s"—as was demonstrated when Palestinian guerrillas were arrested in Rome last September with a SAM-7 aimed at an El Al airliner. "Is it certain that British and American weapons supplied to supposedly friendly governments can all be accounted for? The world is full of people with a grievance, full of weapons, and it cannot be assumed that the British or any other government can now contain the potential threats against it, its citizens, or its visitors."

Readying the Corpse

New York magazine informs that TV networks and national wire services have established a "Nixon Doomwatch" in order to be prepared for a sudden Nixon resignation or removal from office.

According to the magazine, there is a pervasive feeling in New York and Washington newsrooms that the news could come any time, most likely by early spring. Reportedly, TV networks are ready with videotape highlights and news services with a Nixon political obit, for use at moment's notice.

New York also reports that the Ford Foundation is setting aside funds to pay for live TV coverage by the Public Broadcasting System in the event that Nixon hangs on until impeachment begins.

Who's Ridiculous?

One of the readings for the liturgy of Jan. 27 was from the Book of Nehemiah, Chapter 8, Verses 2-6: "Ezra the priest brought the law before the assembly, which consisted of men, women, and those children old enough to understand. Standing at one end of the open place that was before the Water Gate, he read out of the book from daybreak to midday, in the presence of the men, the women, and those children old enough to understand; and all the people listened attentively to the book of the law."

If you didn't get the whole reading, blame *Aim* (Winter, 1973), published by J. S. Paluch Co., Inc., and sent free to all U.S. priests. Its "notes on the liturgy of the season: suggestions and reminders" advised:

"In view of national events, one may wish to drop the first clause of the second sentence in the first reading, to reduce the possibility of ridicule for Scripture."

Odds and Ends

—The Jan. 11 *National Catholic Reporter* featuring Andrew Greeley's "good news" that Catholic schools produce higher percentages of "men and women of hope," also carried his unhopeful assessment that 1974 would be "a year of continuing catastrophe" for American Catholicism. But, then maybe Andrew Greeley didn't go to Catholic schools.

JOHN DEEDY

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CORRESPONDENCE

Art vs. Pornography

Brooklyn, N. Y.

To the Editors: Mark Taylor's refreshingly lucid analysis of pornography [Dec. 7] is valuable not least for its particular emphasis, suggested naturally by his own expertise as a professor of English. He compellingly articulates a concern too often underrepresented in the legal and sociological literature of this debate: the deleterious effects of hard-core pornography on the quality (if one may still use the phrase) of our cultural imagination, and ultimately, of our civilization. For Mark Taylor asserts what too many other modern writers and critics either don't know or are unwilling to state publicly: there *is* an objective difference between art and pornography, and that difference has significant consequences. That he has made this argument with sophistication, wit, and yes, an unapologetic preference for art, itself makes a difference. At least it ought to. ROBERT A. PUGSLEY

Correction

New York, N.Y.

To the Editors: I would like to correct a misprint in my article on the television series, "Religious America" in *Commonweal*, January 18, 1974. The article states: "In many ways, I think Mr. Garvin [the producer] was just bad." Actually, I thought he was just *had*. MICHAEL MURRAY

Paperback Coming

New York, N. Y.

To the Editors: We've noted with interest the correspondence in recent issues [Dec. 21] concerning Robert Coles and Jon Erikson's *A Spectacle Unto the World*, published by Viking. It may interest your readers to know that a Viking Compass paperback edition of the book will be coming out next March, for a price of $3.95, re-

(Continued on page 447)

NEWS & VIEWS: 426 **CORRESPONDENCE: 427**
EDITORIALS: 427
DEATH WISH OR NEW ERA?: *Brian Wicker* **428**
THE NEW POWER-BROKERS: *Russell W. Gibbons* **429**
THE GOLDWATER MYTH: *Peter Steinfels* **431**
THE VATICAN: *Peter Hebblethwaite* **432**
THE SCREEN: *Colin L. Westerbeck, Jr.* **435**
'THE NEW ANTI-SEMITISM': An Exchange of Views 436
HAMILL, BRESLIN & FLAHERTY, LTD.: *Ralph McInerny* **439**
EARTHLY UTOPIA OR ARMAGEDDON?: *Margaret O'Brien Steinfels* **442**
BOOKS: *John P. Sisk, Vivian Mercier, Peter Freiberg* **443**

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COMMONWEAL *A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature and the Arts.*
Second class postage paid at New York, N.Y.
Printed in the USA and published weekly,
except biweekly Christmas-New Year's and June to mid-September,
by Commonweal Publishing Co., 232 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10016
MUrray Hill 3-2042. *Copyright © 1974 Commonweal Publishing Co., Inc.*
US and Canada: $14 a year. Foreign $16. Single copies 50c

MOTHER McCORMACK'S COMPLAINT

The news that Mother Elizabeth J. McCormack, president of Manhattanville College, has resigned from the Society of the Sacred Heart and taken a job with a private foundation dramatizes the problems of identity and direction facing religious orders and institutions.

Mother McCormack's explanation has its paradoxical elements: her complaint seems a conservative one—resentment of change; but the complaint against her is that she has changed things too much. The order she is leaving, she said in an interview in the *New York Times* [Jan. 17], is not the one she joined. When she entered in 1944 the Religious of the Sacred Heart—then known unofficially as the "Madames" because of their French aristocratic origins—were dedicated exclusively to education, particularly of the rich. A strict, sophisticated, semi-cloistered community, sometimes referred to as "female Jesuits," they ran a prestigious network of 20 girls' academies and six colleges throughout the country. But, few religious groups modernized more rapidly or changed more radically. They left cloister, quickly closed institutions they could not staff, questioned their apostolate to the rich and diversified their activities. Within her own field of higher education Mother McCormack was an agent for change. Manhattanville went co-ed, moved into adult education, set up an individualized non-structured curriculum and declared itself a nonsectarian rather than Catholic institution. A major change in her order, however—the 1970 decision to offer five *options* for apostolic work (the poor, the Third World, community living, internationalism and education)—was not for her; so she has started a new career.

By now we have almost become accustomed to prominent priests and nuns—each one, perhaps, for different reasons—changing their vocations. Yet, critical observers detect patterns in these departures. As some see it, charismatic, liberal religious leaders lead their orders through crucial—even traumatic—changes: they close schools and move seminaries to the cities, downplay pious practices once considered the props of religious observance, make schools co-ed and give up religious control—then they pull out, leaving a disheartened community holding the bag.

As others see it, these bold tries to up-date static institutions have really been failing attempts to deal with deeper problems of faith—in the church,

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in God, in the future of the religious life. It is also possible that the blind resistance of inflexible conservative blocs has helped drive creative—but not superhuman—leaders over the hills.

We think religious colleges should keep their religious characters; but some institutions, in order to qualify for desperately-needed state financial aid, have had to declare themselves nonsectarian, while retaining their religious identity through influence rather than through power. And orders have simply had to redefine their ministries to meet new needs. It would be tragic if a backlash against departing reformist leaders were to bring on a soft-pedaling of reform—which has really barely begun—or spawn a generation of timorous presidents and provincials. The reforms of the 1960s, which were, for the most part, merely concessions to history, must be judged on their own merits, not on the personalities or later life-histories of the men and women who brought them about; for these men and women, in their own ways, may have been instruments of God.

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CRISIS IN BRITAIN

DEATH WISH OR NEW ERA?

I am writing this at the turn of the year: a year which, for Britain, is ending in a bang rather than a whimper. Everyone senses that we are in some sort of national crisis, though we are not too clear what to make of it. Are we in the grip of a national death-wish or are we on the brink of a new era?

The current spate of industrial troubles seem to many people symptomatic of a national will to suicide: with powerful unionists 'holding the nation to ransom' as the current cliché goes, going all out for money, while the poor and the weak subside further into their misery. The coincidence of pay-claims and the capitalist version of Christmas lends some plausibility to the doom-watchers' case. But to others, the recent measures taken by the government to cope with the energy shortage—a shortage resulting from a combination of oil-restrictions and a coal-miners' ban on overtime, with a dispute among electricity power men thrown in for good measure—have taken us back to the wartime era. Street-lighting is dim or non-existent, houses only partly heated, floodlighting and neon-lit advertisements banned, and petrol-rationing is on the horizon. It is Britain with its 'back to the wall.' But is not this Britain at its best? the optimists ask. Soon perhaps we'll be back with the old wartime slogans: 'dig for victory' (i.e., grow your own food), 'Careless talk costs lives,' etc., and the sense of national purpose that went with what Evelyn Waugh called the period of "soya beans and basic English."

All over England, just before Christmas, managers and administrators of every sort went into little huddles to discuss how to eke out their supplies and how to make the best of the three-day working week. People in adult education, like myself, have been urged to keep going for the sake of 'national morale.' (My own contribution to this end, ironically enough, will be an extra course on the work of Samuel Beckett!)

Yet the sense of crisis is mostly artificial, for the causes of the present situation are multifarious and often contradictory. For example, the industrial militancy of the miners and the railway drivers stem from quite different situations. The miners are rightly afraid that unless their pay is increased beyond what the government has set as the national limit, there soon won't be any miners left, just at the moment when, ironically enough, the international oil crisis had made them more necessary than ever. So we have the absurd spectacle of everyone (including the government) trying to find ways round the spirit of the law on pay rises, for the miners' benefit, while not actually infringing its letter. The railway drivers, on the other hand, are the victims, not of a chronic staff shortage, but of their own past. They still hanker for the superior status that went with driving steam engines and being the envy of every small boy in the country. Hence their refusal to go along with the rest of the railway industry. Psychologically, their case is understandable enough: technologically and economically it is, I think, absurd (though no more absurd than the idiotic difference between, say, the pay of a train driver and the driver of a jumbo-jet).

Far more important than the immediate industrial crisis, of course, is the long-term problem of shortages. The oil-shortage is only the most publicized: shortages of other alleged essentials, like paper, are just as damaging—or just as bracing, if you choose to look at the situation that way. Will the paper shortage mean fewer books, or just less packaging and fewer advertisements? An Anglican bishop has already welcomed the end of the 'greedy society,' but I fear his prophecy is premature. Yet there are signs that the long-term crisis may be having a salutory effect.

For example, the bicycle trade is booming, and has been exempted from recent controls on hire-purchase. (I know this to my cost since my own bike was stolen only a few weeks ago, presumably by some far-sighted scoundrel who saw where the future lay.) Shall we soon be returning to the cycling era? Will the Arabs force us

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to recognize the truths recently put about by Ivan Illich about the bicycle's supremacy as a form of efficient locomotion? If so, I for one shall be glad—having just bought a new bicycle to replace the old. It is a symbolic bicycle: one of those folding ones that you can put in the back of your car, made in Holland. It is symbolic of our having joined Europe, I suppose. But speaking of the Common Market, if it has done us precious little good in material terms, perhaps it has helped us in two small, but not insignificant ways.

Firstly it has proved, to me at any rate, the futility of economics. I always thought economics was a dreary subject: I now know that it is also a pointless one. What is the use of a study which merely results in highly paid experts, supposedly advising the nation on its practical options, systematically contradicting each other on every issue of importance? The second advantage is even smaller, but no less worthwhile for all that. By joining the Common Market we have acquired the first worthwhile new word coined by an Englishman, as distinct from an American, for some years. I refer to the immortal summing-up of the recent Copenhagen meeting, of E.E.C. heads of government, by an understandably anonymous, but nonetheless medal-worthy British official. In one new word, he crisply disposed of that kind of nonsense: 'Eurocrap.' I think there is hope for lexicographers, if not for many other people, in 1974.

BRIAN WICKER

(Brian Wicker is Commonweal*'s regular correspondent in Great Britain.)*

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COAL FOR OIL

THE NEW POWER-BROKERS

Arnold Miller may well be the prototype of the unassuming common man, thrust into uncommon leadership opportunities, propelled by a sense of internal outrage yet tempered by a decency which has become increasingly attractive this past year. Facing the nation's bituminous coal operators to discuss a new contract for some 125,000 miners this month, he represents a work sector which is fully conscious of its new significance as an alternate supply industry in a country literally running out of gas.

His predecessors provide the historically fascinating study of contrasts and contradictions. From the time of Calvin Coolidge to that of Eisenhower, it was John L. Lewis who dominated the confrontations with the coal operators, who to the public was a towering, grim, belligerent and pontifical labor czar but to whose miners was something of a man for their time. The wretched little person who followed him, "Tony" Boyle, was everything the operators could hope for in a man to deal with. And deal they did, and so did Tony.

Boyle's depravations were, of course, the incubation of the revolt which catapulted Arnold Miller from a modest pension in Ohley, West Virginia to a $30,000-a-year presidency of a union with assets of $80-million and potentially enormous power brokerage in a high-energy-consumption economy. Just a year ago he won the leadership of the United Mine Workers after defeating the Boyle machine in an election upset that was the preoccupation of much of the Labor Department for several months.

In December, the Miners wrapped up a two-week convention stay in Pittsburgh in an unusual display of parliamentary democracy—some delegates grumbled that it was "permissiveness"—and what emerged was a mixed bag for the insurgent Miners for Democracy who were thrust into the tests of power between and among the coal owners, the government and their complex membership. For the soft-spoken Miller, it was somewhat of a political maturation process, and he soon won a dual credibility and respect when he proceeded to run an open convention. In a union which had traditionally silenced dissent by intimidation and not infrequent physical beatings, the transition itself was notable.

If "rank and file" is one of the most overworked and least understood terms in labor phraseology, then the Miners' experience may provide further complexity to the grey area of trade union insurgency and reform. What is not in dispute is the rapid rise of the UMW rebels, who were given little chance to topple the Boyle regime, the inheritance of an iron autocracy established and unchallenged under Lewis for fully half a century. Yet win they did, and unlike the leaders of many other internal union reform movements, its leaders proceeded to spread the instruments of power to the members in the union's two dozen coalfield districts.

They have done so even to their own disfavor: after abolition of the blatantly illegal practice of appointing rather than electing district officials, the Miller reform candidates have won only half of the elections which have restored local autonomy, including significant coal heartlands such as eastern Kentucky and southwestern West Virginia. In the convention itself, Miller emerged as a determined leader who was taking a tough posture toward the operators, but who would not relent on the issue of expanding internal union democracy. This decision, and the absence of any traditional steam-roller

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power plays which in the past have brought delegates into alignment, may have cost his leadership two crucial bargaining instruments.

Despite the cheers and outward militancy which greeted Miller's assertion to the convention that a six-months strike was a "distinct possibility" in the coalfields this year, the delegates turned down his proposal to set up a $100-million strike fund and then surprised most observers by rejecting a negotiated improvement in the grievance-handling procedure. The delegates had earlier approved a dues increase of $6.75 monthly, and telephone calls and wires from miners apparently negated any hope of additional strike fund assessments. The grievance-procedure rejection would have helped eliminate many wildcat strikes, costly to the union welfare royalties as well as to company profits.

Virtually unanimous, however, was the delegates' support of the UMW's 1974 bargaining stance, which will emphasize safety. The union is asking the companies to pay the full cost of the black-lung disease monthly benefits program, and it will also seek to make all miners eligible for black-lung payments after 15 years of service. A grotesque aspect of the convention was that all of the working miner delegates assume that "if we don't have it now, by that time we will." And the convention's Officers' Report noted that top federal mine safety officials reported that 1972 had been "a good year in terms of fatalities," with "only" 156 men the victims of mine explosions or fires. Such statistics account for the union's goals, which also include full pay for miners out of work because of safety-related mine closings, and a full-time doctor and nurse at all mines.

The two-week gathering of a thousand or more miners in Pittsburgh's Hilton Hotel was in effect a symbolic rebirth of a union which had long suffered public disfavor. While the Miller leadership is far from ideological, those who have directed the first year of the union's technical and operative functions since the Boyle ouster represent a politically astute, professionally competent group, tracing their commitment to the coalfields to the period when they allied themselves with the then insurgent Miners for Democracy in a seemingly quixotic crusade. They now appear to be opening the union up from its former insularity to the protest and reform movements of the sixties and seventies.

The coloration of the convention was sophisticated if open; a photo display in the lobby included a graphic history of the horrors of the miners' calling, the decades of repression, the grand autocracy of the Lewis years and the depths to which the union had sunk under the Boyle machine, including the murder of pre-Miller reformer Jock Yablonski and his family in 1970. The delegates cheered Farm Worker leader Cesar Chavez and gave him $12,000 for his cause ("you are celebrating your rebirth, we are trying to secure our own birth," he told Miller). They responded warmly when Steelworkers' chief I. W. Abel recalled the Miners' as the wellspring for industrial unionism of the thirties, heard the Auto Workers' Leonard Woodcock (whose West Virginia and Ohio cadres had hurriedly instructed UMW delegates in parliamentary procedures before the convention, a telling point of what had happened to the Miners), and stood up for Edward Kennedy and Joe Rauh (whose legal talents were largely responsible for the Miller victory, and who could bill the UMW for upwards of $200,000 for those services).

Removal of the UMW headquarters from Washington "back to the coalfields where the miners are," as Miller contends, will likely bring the union to his native West Virginia. This produced little opposition, but more visible opposition faces the leadership over such issues as strip mining. Many members are opposed to it because of the rape of the Appalachian hills, but others see the western states—especially Wyoming—as the potential coal-producing states of the future, where it is relatively easy to surface-strip.

Essentially, however, it is the national energy trauma which will place the rejuvenated Mine Workers in a position of potential power brokerage. The owners and operators will no longer be making Boyle-type arrangements, and they will be under additional pressure as suppliers for alternate energy should the crisis negate much of the anti-pollution legislation which has produced the coal-to-oil conversion process. Last August Miller told the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions that "we could run the country on coal today." That just may happen, and Arnold Miller may have something to say about it.

RUSSELL W. GIBBONS

(Russell W. Gibbons, a frequent contributor, is a labor editor in Pittsburgh.)

COMING

FRANCES MOORE LAPPE *writes about the world's food* problems:

"What Malthus neglected to appreciate in the late 18th century was that economic imbalance, not numbers of people, would come to place the greatest burden on the earth's productive capacity. He failed to foresee the enormous economic gap between the rich minority and the poor majority—a condition in which any agricultural abundance that the world could produce could just as readily be consumed by the rich minority. But then, how could Malthus have foreseen that the world would become so economically imbalanced that it would eventually be to the advantage of the rich to concentrate the world's agricultural resources on feeding animals, not people?"

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THE GOLDWATER MYTH

PETER STEINFELS

THE OTHER day, when Operation Candor was abruptly transformed into Operation Bluster, liberals were disappointed to find not only Gerald Ford but Barry Goldwater voicing the White House line that Watergate is the nefarious plot of partisan extremists. Shortly before a page-one story in the *New York Times* had proclaimed Goldwater "back in style." The reason? "Watergate—and Senator Goldwater's outspoken criticism of President Nixon." When a columnist somewhere wrote that Watergate was only Goldwaterism in action, the *Times* printed the Senator's protest on its Op-ed page.

Nothing could be sillier than this liberal infatuation with Goldwater, and nothing more predictable than the ultimate let-down. For that columnist was essentially correct.

By all accounts Barry Goldwater is a charming and personally decent man. A while ago it was reported that he had leapt from a yacht and rescued several victims of a capsized sailboat. One gets the impression that for Goldwater such a deed is all part of a day's outing and he would never think to instruct an assistant to issue a press release. If I were a drowning man I would certainly prefer to have Goldwater in the vicinity than Ted Kennedy. Unfortunately the Arizonian's chosen vocation is politician, not life-guard; and if I were unemployed, on welfare, in need of a good union—or being bugged by the FBI—I would prefer the attention of Senator Kennedy.

Goldwaterism is larger than Mr. Goldwater's personal virtues; and if anyone needs to be reminded of its connections with Watergate, he might cast a glance back at Richard Rovere's description of the "new breed" of Goldwater supporters at the 1964 G.O.P. convention. "What has been really frightening here has not been the tactics but the tacticians. . . . [They] were, for the very most part, smartly dressed, well adjusted, well organized, and well spoken. And they were hard as nails. The spirit of compromise and accommodation was wholly alien to them. . . . They came for a total ideological victory and the total destruction of their critics."

But instead of observing the Senator's adherents, should we not seek the spirit of Goldwaterism first in the man's own writings, and are not those writings paeans to individual liberty and limited government? The problem here is not simple, since Mr. Goldwater's books are the product of numerous ghost writers and it is hardly clear whether he can be any more identified with his signed books than with his followers. Yet a reexamination of *The Conscience of a Conservative,* for instance, reveals a concern mainly for economic liberties and limited government in regard to taxation, economic regulation, welfare services, states rights, and aid to education. Of government threats to personal privacy, of the dangers of using the FBI and the espionage establishment for partisan politics, of the potential for suppressing dissent under guise of "national security" and the struggle against subversion, there is nary a word. And why should there be? Senator Goldwater had been an outspoken defender of Joe McCarthy in the '50s. Of course Goldwater, a gentleman, had tried in vain to talk McCarthy into behaving like a gentleman also, just as today Goldwater, an extraordinarily candid man, has tried equally in vain to talk Nixon into candor. But in the end, Goldwater voted against censure of McCarthy and bitterly denounced the Wisconsin demagogue's critics as Communist-leaning partisans. "Because Joe McCarthy lived, we are a safer, freer, more vigilant nation today," he said a few years later.

Goldwaterism was not a dike against the political passions which flowed into Watergate; it was one of the sources which fed them: In the name of national security, it always gave back to the government greater power than it proposed to remove by reinstating Robber Baron capitalism. It always portrayed its opponents as politically beyond the pale, their measures not only mistaken but unconstitutional—"socialists," who were more dangerous than foreign enemies. It was always determined to rip out the New Deal and all its pomps and works. And it believed in Authority and the military virtues generally.

Goldwater himself did not so much lead this movement as go along with it. But it is a silly illusion to think he may lead any movement against Nixon—although he may go along with one. All along, Goldwater's criticisms of Nixon's behavior have been tactical, not fundamental: the President's obfuscation is ruining his Administration, or ruining the Republican party. Such tactical considerations, or personal pique at being caught with one of the White House deceptions smudged on his face, may finally move the Senator into reluctant action.

Meanwhile, liberals could do better than to confuse personal amiability with political integrity and candor with intelligence. We may enjoy congratulating ourselves on our tolerance for the "good" conservative (especially when he is safely distant from power), and exercise a by-now mechanical sense of irony that our supposed historical villains should turn out the heroes. My own reading of history is that if the Left waits till the conservatives activate their famous virtues of independence and honor against illegitimate authority, it will wait until there is no one else free to act at all but these adept conservatives.

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THE VATICAN

PETER HEBBLETHWAITE

The contrast between reality and the rhetoric of Vatican Council II

The Vatican (by which I mean compendiously the Vatican City State, the Holy See, the Pope, the Roman Curia) has devised an excellent method for dealing with its critics: it simply outlasts them. Its confident capacity to survive is expressed in its buildings. The image of rock-like permanence, against which the waves of change lash in vain, is conveyed through the baroque palaces and churches. The saints on the roof of St. Peter's have a swaggering air, as though they were declaring to the world—*urbi et orbi*—'We've got it in the bag.' They are the embodiment of that 'triumphalism' in which the Counter-Reformation gloried and which Vatican II deplored.

This contrast between what the buildings declare and the rhetoric of Vatican II is a good way of putting the dilemma of the Vatican today. As Kenneth Clark noted, the Counter-Reformation worked on the principle that if the Reformers said something, then one must take the opposite tack. If they denied the real presence, then it must be honored in even more splendid processions. If they rejected auricular confession, then it must be made the center of the spiritual life. If they dismiss the cult of saints as idolatrous, then build ever more sumptuous reliquaries, and celebrate their feasts with still more pomp. Bernini's swooning St. Theresa of Avila sums it up. What could the Protestants offer in reply to this God-intoxicated sweet excess? The men of the Reformation were grim. Their art was journalism, their skill lay in devising slogans ('Justification by faith,' 'Scripture alone'). Rome, on the other hand, is the celebration of confident Catholic faith, which rejoices in space and light and color. There was something after all in what Cajetan is made to say in John Osborne's *Luther:* Protestantism released *Angst* into the world.

In principle, Vatican II told a different story. It is by now so well known that people yawn at the rehearsal of it. But it meant the death of arrogance, the decline of triumphalism, a mortal blow to clerical status-seeking. Ecumenism was to be embraced, not because the Christian Churches felt pushed into a corner of the modern world, but because a reading of the 'signs of the times' suggested that this was what the Spirit was saying to the Churches. Similarities, not differences, were to be stressed. The 'world'—that grand and misty concept—was no longer to be regarded as hostile, the object of denunciations and warnings, but as the field of action of God's grace in history. Office in the Church, including the papacy itself, was to be seen as a form of service to the Christian community. Indeed the notion of community became absolutely central: it was the essential middle term between naked authority and anarchistic liberty. John Courtney Murray found an image for it: authority and freedom were like the two sides of a Gothic arch—they needed each other for support. But the result of this creative tension was community.

Now these splendid ideas continue to inform Roman rhetoric. No speech, no document, is complete without its quota of references to Vatican II. Yet the reflexes, as distinct from the rhetoric, come from a deeper level of history. The dominant attitudes are Counter-Reformation, though the language is that of Vatican II. Or rather, one can never be quite sure, in a particular case,

FATHER PETER HEBBLETHWAITE, *a British Jesuit and editor of* The Month, *recently announced that he plans to resign from the priesthood.*

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whether the older reflex or the newer rhetoric will prevail. The dilemma is reflected in the hesitations and actions of Pope Paul. He knows perfectly well that he cannot go back to the autocratic ways of Pius XII, whom he served for so long. Nor has he the warm spontaneity of John XXIII. No simple amalgam of the two previous pontificates is possible anyway. He knows that he must be himself. And that is where what Malachi Martin correctly called the "Agony of Pope Paul" comes in. What are the true needs of the Church? The fact that he is criticized as bitterly on the right as on the left convinces him that he is a moderate. At the Council he worked for reconciliation. The compromise texts were the result of his desire that in the end there should be *pas de vaincus, mais de convaincus.* But nearly eight years on, the cracks begin to re-appear, and with them the anxious questionings. What will history say?

The day before his coronation, Pope Paul went to the Milanese Church of San Carlo in the Corso to say farewell to his diocese. He shed tears. In that familiar conversational tone he adopts when someone else has not written his speech, he asked simply: *"Che cosa sarà di me?* What will become of me?" He found his answer in the Gospel of St. John: 'Another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish to go' (John 21:18). The figure of St. Peter haunts him. In conversation with a papal diplomat last year he said that now he understood St. Peter who came to Rome twice, the second time to be crucified. One glimpses here simultaneously the courage, the tenacity and the bewilderment of the man who is Pope Paul. "What will become of me?"

In the ecumenical field one can see the hesitancies most clearly. As long as it is a matter of receiving honored guests, he finds the right words of friendship, Christian solidarity and hope for the future. But presented with a report of a theological agreement with, say Anglicans, on the Eucharist or on ministry, both of which could have immense practical consequences for inter-communion or mutual recognition of ministries, then he balks. That would involve too radical a departure. It is safer to confine oneself to the gestures of ecumenism. The agreement on the Eucharist was held up for weeks, reluctantly published, and scaled down in importance.

When presented with the agreement on ministry, he said there were many things he did not agree with in it and many things he would wish to add. He went on: "But I am not a dictator" and said it should be shown to Cardinal Seper. Yet it was Pope Paul personally who wrote the passage—at the eleventh hour—into the speech for the canonization of the English and Welsh Martyrs in which the Anglican Communion is addressed as an "ever beloved sister in the one authentic communion of the family of Christ." The staff of the Secretariat for Christian Unity hadn't dared put that in. It was an admirable gesture by Pope Paul, designed to soften the blow of the canonization that some Anglicans found offensive. "But just you try treating them as a Sister Church and see what happens to you," said one frustrated ecumenist. The complex Roman ballet of one step forwards, two steps sideways, one step backwards, two steps sideways, gives only the illusion of movement.

There has been no encyclical since *Humanae Vitae* in 1968. It may be, as Eliot said of *Paradise Lost,* that "it exhausted the literary *genre.*" There has been no papal trip since November 1971. The first journeys were admirably chosen for their symbolic value: a return to the origins of Christianity in the Holy Land, a visit to India which esteems austere holy men, the trip to the United Nations where the hopes and frustrations of the nations find expression. Africa and the bold declaration: "There must be an African Christianity for Africa." But attendances at two further Eucharistic Congresses, in Latin America and Australia, not to mention the visit to Portugal, made less impact. The novelty of the pilgrim Pope who gets up and goes was beginning to wear off. Even the bungled assassination attempt could not redress the balance. Yet Pope Paul has been immensely stimulated by these journeys. Like many who have to live in Rome, he feels better the further he gets away from the city. But where else can he go? UNESCO in Paris? Or that much rumored trip to Poland? After a time, one runs out of symbolic gestures.

The Approaching End

It is difficult to escape the impression that we are approaching the end of the pontificate. And I do not mean resignation. Just as in the last years of Pius XII, there was much muttering and waiting for the end and sub-empires grew up, so it is now. To say this, and even to think it, is to be accused of *lèse-majesté.* Yet the need for an evaluation of the papacy remains. Yes to the mystery of the Church is not incompatible with an honest attempt to state what is the case. Historians of the future will do it anyway, and no one will blame them. Timing is all. With those provisos in mind, let us say it bluntly: the Roman Curia is a court, it is exposed to no outside checks on its competence or efficiency, and it depends on the overall grasp of the Pontiff. But since his task is literally impossible, the courtiers—that is the right name for members of a curia—will in practice tend to take over. Naturally they will deny this, and explain that they are simply serving the Pope.

Among the Roman officials who have thus received enhanced importance is the Substitute, Archbishop Giovanni Benelli. Last year I wrote some hard, and one or two inaccurate, things about him; so rather than hound him any more, it would be as well to let him explain in his own words what he thinks he is doing. His of-

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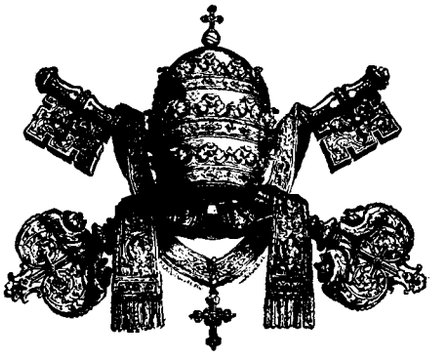
fended Excellency gave an interview to Andrew Tarnowski of Reuter's. He made in substance two points (apart from impressing the interviewer and producing some picturesque 'atmosphere'—'The conversation—a quick animated flow accompanied by elegantly rounded gestures of his delicate hands—is punctuated frequently with the quietly spoken expletive "Per Bacco" '). The first was that he only does what the Pope tells him to do. The second was that the Holy Father needed a strong executive, and could not be expected to be up at four in the morning arranging a plane to take relief to Nicaragua.

These are perfectly reasonable lines of defense. But each answer poses a new question. To do nothing except what the Pope says reveals admirable loyalty, but since Msgr. Benelli is the principal channel of communication, both upwards and downwards, subordinates are always left with a sense of ambiguity: just what is this 'Higher Authority' which is always invoked. In particular cases it is difficult to know. Again, the need for a strong executive is undeniable, and the *London Times* also resorted to this defense. Unfortunately, it cited Bob Haldeman as another example of a tough top executive, who remarked that "enemies go with the assignment." But that was before Watergate splashed.

Archbishop Benelli adopted another line in a speech given in Augsburg later last year. This time he produced



a well-documented essay on the relationship between the center and the periphery. Once more it was the rhetoric of Vatican II. There has been great decentralization, he claimed, and the Synod of Bishops has been set up. But how much decentralization is there really when the American Bishops can be rapped for a perfectly legitimate experiment of communion before first confession, or when a Papal Nuncio in Bonn thinks he can remove a bishop by writing a secret letter? (A *maquisard* in the Secretariat of State revealed its contents to the press and the Nuncio was foiled.) As for the Synod of Bishops, after the shambles of 1971 when the bishops nearly gave the wrong answer on the ordination of married men, it has been deferred by a year, will be enveloped in the grandiose manifestation of the Holy Year, and has been provided with an agenda on Evangelization of such timidity that the world's eyes will very properly be elsewhere. (E.g., "What judgment is one to make on the lessening of conversions from other Christian confessions? Is it due to badly understood ecumenism—among other things?") Far from being the lived expression of collegiality it was intended to be, the Synod has slumped to being an occasional, tolerated talking shop. It is not taken seriously. The real decisions are taken elsewhere. Finally, on this point, ponder anew the implications of the talk about 'center and periphery.' The center is clearly Rome, and the periphery is . . . everywhere else. Thus did the ancient Roman senators gather their togas about them and sigh "more trouble among the *Belgi*, it's time to do something about the unruly Picts."

It is, I hasten to emphasize, no use blaming individuals where the system is at fault. Democratic and consultative velleities have been superimposed on a monarchical system. There now exists in the Curia a coordinating committee. One of its purposes is to enable members of the Secretariat for Christian Unity, for example, to explain what they have been doing and the point of the agreements that have been reached. This is a welcome move, but those who have not actually participated in a dialogue find it hard to comprehend the conclusions in isolation. They look at the result, not the process, and find it tough to swallow. Dangerous implications lurk. A bishop who shall be nameless resigned from the Roman Curia. He gave as his reason: "The trouble here is that important decisions are mysteriously taken in five minutes, while trivial matters are dragged out for months."

The remark could be applied to the *Ostpolitik* of the Vatican. By this is meant the whole area of relations with Communist countries. This policy, steadily pursued since the early 1960s by Msgr. Agostino Casaroli, has a double aim. One purpose is to improve the lot of Catholics living under Communist regimes. The other is to contribute something towards peace and détente among nations. Both aims are close to the Pope's heart, and it must be a relief to him to turn away from the disturbing conflicts of inner-church life to diplomatic discourse on peace with people like Mr. Gromyko (twice), President Podgorny of the Supreme Soviet, not to mention Mr. Ceaucescu and the Polish Foreign Minister. But some critics, especially exiles from East Europe, find the policy ineffectual for improving the fate of Catholics, and scandalous in that it means talking to men with very dirty hands. They talk of "spitting on the blood of martyrs." One exile has even said that he prefers "a Russian prison to so-called Roman freedom." It is true that many of the exiles are highly strung. Having studied the matter, I think that Msgr. Casaroli is right, that the policy of dialogue is the only possible one, that trading insults gets one nowhere, and that one should think in the long-term.

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But the fact remains that there is no system for *evaluating* this or any other policy, no forum in which questions can be asked, no congressional committees to put awkward questions, no system of accountability except before God. Meanwhile, in the world we actually live in, their lack has to be remedied by intrepid journalists. But the moment they start asking questions, they put themselves in jeopardy. Doors close. Ill-will is attributed to them. The whole thing has to be taken *en bloc,* issues are judged in black and white, neutrals and moderates are not allowed to exist. There is no concept of 'loyal opposition.' Above all, no *discrimination* is possible. And in times of crisis, that is what we most need. I can believe in the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church, without having to accept every utterance that emanates from the third floor of the Apostolic Palace. To assert that is supremely orthodox, since the Church is the mediating community of faith, not its object.

The present situation will continue until the next pontificate, or the next but one. Whether one judges it to be irremediable or not depends on one's faith in the power of the surprising Holy Spirit and, sociologically, on how one views the prospects for change in a very large institution. A large institution, said Peter Drucker, always finds change difficult: a flea can jump ten times its own height, while an elephant finds it hard to get off the ground. Seen in that light, the changes since Vatican II have been considerable and not trivial. But they are not enough, and they are not enough partly because of the physical oppression imposed by the buildings, by what one might call irreverently the inherited plant. The weight of past history is a strength, but it can also be a burden. Perhaps relevant change will come only when some of the impossible ambitions are sloughed off.

For the load placed on the shoulders of a monarchical Pope today has become intolerable. It is as though someone were asked to be simultaneously Secretary General of the United Nations, President of the United States *and* Mayor of New York. Something has to give, to crack. "What will become of me?" asked the Pope. And what will become of his successors, several of whom are alive and among us today? The Pope could once again become the Bishop of Rome—Rome badly needs a bishop—and live among his people. Then away in the Alban Hills could be the Secretariat of the Universal Church, a center of liaison and exchange of positive ideas. The Pope could go out there once a week. He could still fulfill his essential role of symbolizing and expressing the Church's unity, of which the Holy Spirit is the cause. Other Christians have already recognized the need for a primacy which would be manifestly based on love and service. The Vatican museums could be turned over to UNESCO. But what could be done with St. Peter's?

PURE PAP

THE SCREEN

Dwight MacDonald has an anti-auteur theory that some of the best films are made by the worst directors, second-rate talents who get lucky on just one film. For Franklin J. Schaffner that film was *Patton.* Its locations are the center stage of history for the era it depicts, and its characters are the era's main protagonists. The film's foregrounds and backgrounds rate equal emphasis, equally sharp rendering, and Schaffner's wide-screen, deep-focus treatment achieves it. In the very first scene, where *Patton* delivers a harangue before a flag enormous enough to fill the entire Panavision screen, Schaffner forcefully established both an acting style and a visual style that could be sustained throughout the film. The consequence of this success, it seems, was to persuade Schaffner that he had at last found a home in a certain type of period epic. Before *Patton* he had been rather restless and eclectic, directing projects as different as *The Best Man* (1964) and *The Planet of the Apes* (1968). But since *Patton* he has dedicated himself to reduplicating its success.

Unfortunately, he hasn't been able to do so. *Nicholas and Alexandra* fails because the characters are history's nebbishes instead of its titans. A four-foot actor-dwarf is appropriately but tragically cast as Nicholas, leaving us with little to look at in the foreground no matter how sharp the focus. And in Schaffner's new film, *Papillon,* the successful formula of *Patton* is negated still further. Since the new film is set in the penal colony of French Guiana, one of the most remote backwaters of human events imaginable, even the backgrounds are historically insignificant this time. Between the steamy monotony of those backgrounds and the lackluster personalities of the characters in the foreground, *Papillon* is Schaffner's most colorless film yet.

Colorlessness seems to be just what Schaffner was striving for, in fact, as if it were a visual style like his use of deep focus in *Patton.* This is especially noticeable in the opening scene, whose washed-out, diffused images appear an attempt to copy the tinted quality of early color photographs. But where the opening scene of *Patton* unifies character and visual style, the pale, gauzy opening here seems more an effort to obscure the contradictions that inhere in the film. Again, as in *Patton,* a speech is being made. An official is telling some prisoners that they are being transported to Guiana, and that this means France has turned her back on them and forgotten them. No sooner has he finished, though, when they are paraded to their ship with great commotion and ceremony along boulevards lined with spectators. Unlike France, Schaffner wants these to be the best-remem-

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bered forgotten men of all time. The photography isn't all that's hazy here.

Inconsistencies of this sort permeate the whole plot, but at the heart of them lies the character of Papillon himself (Steve McQueen). On the one hand Papillon claims, even in his dreams, that he was framed—that he is a completely harmless safe-cracker incapable of the murder he was convicted of. On the other hand, on board the transport ship he rents himself to forger Louis Degas (Dustin Hoffman) as a very effective, knife-wielding bodyguard. The result of this dual nature Papillon seems to have is that we are never sure what his motives or capabilities are. When he's thrown into solitary, for instance, Degas smuggles him extra food; but his warders discover it and try to starve him into confessing who his benefactor is. At last he calls them in to reveal an incriminating note from Degas. But instead he says he can't remember who helped him, and then, after they say he's dying, he eats the note rather than turn it over to save himself. What kind of gesture is this supposed to be—new defiance or final resignation? Did he ever intend to betray Degas or did he not? The further the scene progresses, the more confusing it becomes.

The one clear thing about this scene is that it has more of the elements of comedy in it than epic. Whenever a man is in a completely hopeless situation, and yet escapes again and again as Papillon does, it's funny rather than heroic. It's the stuff of which Keaton, Chaplin and Woody Allen movies are made. Schaffner doesn't seem to resist the burlesque in Papillon's predicaments, but it doesn't seem to be what he expected to find in this story either. His direction always seems to be looking forward to some moment when the film's mood will naturally turn serious and dramatic. That moment never arrives, of course; and at the end of the film Papillon still hasn't made the Great Escape for which he became famous in the first place.

Yet when we take our leave of him, he is in the throes of giving it one more try, having leapt off Devil's Island onto a bag of coconuts cast amidst treacherous currents and sharks. The always more cautious Degas looks on with his usual disapproval of such antics, and hobbles away unconcernedly as soon as Papillon clears the rocks. What Degas' calm at this moment suggests is something he has known all along, something Papillon never will learn and Schaffner has perhaps only just now realized, regretfully: that it was all always merely a matter of sheer dumb luck anyway.

COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

an exchange of views

'The New Anti-Semitism'

Washington, D.C.

To the Editors: Michael Novak, in his article "The New Anti-Semitism" [Dec. 21], made some important points about ethnicity and a contextual understanding of historical traditions, which are essential to a better understanding of Jews by Christians. However, unfortunately, he made these points in the midst of a bombastic and self-righteous attack on Dan Berrigan (castigating Dan Berrigan's presumed self-righteousness!). This largely vitiated a good communication of the valid points he was making.

Dan Berrigan is not anti-Semitic. His close association with Jews, and even somewhat idealistic self-identification with Jews, is well known. He suffers, as most Christians do, from a lack of understanding of how Judaism interprets itself and how important Israel is in that identification, as well as a myopia about the way in which Christian images of Jews have formed the bedrock of anti-Semitism. These lacks, together with genuine concern for injustice to the Palestinians as a result of the establishment of the state of Israel, led to the tenor of the talk he gave, reprinted in *American Report.* Such defects are not anti-Semitism. They belong to a far milder breed of myopia towards oneself and others for which such a term is vastly inappropriate. The present effort to improve communication between these two tragically divided communities would be aided if people, such as Rabbi Hertzberg and Michael Novak, would be less quick with the trigger finger. We may need that word to describe far more dangerous phenomena, and its meaning and seriousness should not be dissipated by nervous shepherds who cry 'wolf, wolf' everytime they see a stray sheep.

ROSEMARY RADFORD RUETHER

Narberth, Pa.

To the Editors: Michael Novak completely misconstrues the nature of "the new anti-Semitism" in his article on that subject [Dec. 21]. What he does is accept without analysis, or even definition, a simple-minded identification of "anti-Semitism" with criticism of (or hostility toward) Israel or the American Jewish community. This is precisely the usage that many Jewish leaders have employed as an instrument of suppressive propaganda, since it transforms any criticism of Israeli policies, or ac-

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tions of its supporters, into something evil, with appropriate references to the holocaust. Novak plays into this suppressive propaganda effort with more than his usual naiveté.

Real anti-Semitism has two facets: racial or cultural denigration and dehumanization involving Semitic peoples, plus policies that deprive them of legal rights. The ugly reality that eludes Novak is that the *Arabs* have taken the place of the Jews in the West as the threatening Semitic lesser breed—Israel and the Jews have become the civilized and civilizing Western enclave of unappreciated light in the backwaters of Araby—reflected in the overwhelming moral and material support for Israel in the U.S. and Western Europe, as well as in attitudes of admiration for Israel and its prowess and achievements, contempt for the Arabs, their failures, disunity, and lack of modern plumbing. Also depressingly evident is a racist attitude on the part of many Israelis and American Jews (as well as others) toward the Arabs. As in Dayan's statement that "I'll fear an Arab attack the day the Arabs learn to ride buses." Time and again in arguments with American Jews, when the myth of a benign Zionist takeover of Palestine is called into question and the extent of de facto expropriation and "push" is established, one is regularly confronted with a retreat to the position of a lesser Arab importance (and the rights of the stronger) that justifies the return of Zion. As regards the process whereby a territory with an Arab majority could become a Jewish state, the role of the Deir-Yassin massacre of 1948—with 250 Arabs, including some 100 women and children, slaughtered in cold blood—and the Israeli use of the "myth" of Deir-Yassin as a mechanism for inducing a panic exodus of Arabs, is spelled out in an important pair of articles by Claude Bourdet in *Le Monde* of Nov. 14 and 23, 1973. The leaders of Israel have behaved no worse than others similarly situated, but it is a bitter irony that the heritage of the holocaust brought no meliorating of basic tendencies toward racism and reliance on brute force in the settlement and state-building process of the remnants.

Novak repeats also the cliché that "the issue for the Israelis, as it is not for the Arabs, is survival." This takes the Jewish microcosm and compares it with the Arab macrocosm. One could reverse this and say "the issue for the Palestinian Arabs, as it is not for Jews, is survival." Perhaps for Novak the Palestinians are a non-people, as compared with the Israelis—as in Prime Minister Golda Meir's well known "There was no such thing as Palestinians"—so that their non-survival can be ignored. Is there not a touch of "anti-Semitism," more real than any he attributes to Berrigan, in Novak's sophistry on the threatened survival of Israel and total disregard of the Palestinian Arabs?

In his discussion of Jewish attitudes toward Nixon, Novak omits mention of the numerous (and frequently illegal) Israeli official appeals in support of Nixon, and he disregards the very substantial conservative *shift* in the Jewish vote, quite often openly explained in terms of Nixon's assumed greater reliability in supporting Israel. It is amusing that Novak does not hesitate to generalize about "the left" on the basis of what he finds in a statement by Dan Berrigan—one individual —while objecting strongly to Berrigan's failure to separate out the complexities of the Jewish vote!

Novak speculates in the end on the "destination of the left," with these anti-Semitic tendencies as revealed in Dan Berrigan. But more to the point would be speculation on the destination of Michael Novak, a philosophically displaced person, still writing for *Commonweal* but now expounding an intellectually lightweight and opportunistic version of Meany cold war liberalism. Novak needs a rest, a period of meditation and gathering together of thoughts, before he goes off the deep end.

EDWARD S. HERMAN

New York, N.Y.

To the Editors: Cheers for Michael Novak's brilliant and compassionate piece on "The New Anti-Semitism" (Dec. 21].

As for Berrigan, the self-nominated Jew, he has not acquired with his new role the eternal Jewish consciousness of being ever in danger of massacre. All that he has accomplished is to mess up a bit the image of "the beloved Father Dan."

More such fathers, and Jews will become totally orphaned.

DAVID DAVIDSON

Pittsburgh, Pa.

To the Editors: Michael Novak's absurdities about the "new anti-Semitism" are, to put it as kindly as possible, unworthy of him and of *Commonweal* [Dec. 21]. I say this not so much in defense of Daniel Berrigan's speech (although that could be a case in itself) but in simple amazement at Novak's fudging of Judaism and zionism.

If zionism is nothing else, it is certainly a political movement. If Judaism is nothing else, it is essentially one of the major orthodoxies of the world. If the two are one, then Novak ultimately is making Judaism answerable to a political ideology. If the two are one, then any criticism of zionist ideology is doomed in advance as an attack on Judaism, and I, for one, think that this is an insult to Judaism as well as palpable rubbish. I doubt if Judaism would disappear if the zionist movement—like any political movement, any ideology, any ism—petered out. If the two are not one, then what in the hell is Novak trying to say?

To refute this kind of nonsense is particularly galling at this stage of the Arab-Israeli question. I would simply suggest that Novak research the *Commonweal* archives, particularly the issue of January 24, 1969 ("Israel: Its Dilemma and Ours"), or read the articles of former *Commonweal* staffer, William Pfaff, or read I. F. Stone or anything at all on the subject by Dorothy Thompson, Arnold Toynbee, Martin Buber, Israel Shahak, or, if Novak is really interested in impartiality and has not let his ethnic imperatives get the better of him, Daniel Berrigan. I would also suggest that whoever writes under

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the name of Sisyphus do the same. *Commonweal* has been one of the few magazines that has striven for impartiality on this question, and I simply cannot sit back and see this impartiality compromised by the dubious "liberal" theologizing of writers who do not know the difference between history and polemics.

SAMUEL HAZO

New York, N.Y.

To the Editors: In his recent article [Dec. 21] Michael Novak continues to pursue his favorite pastime of chastising the unruly new and Catholic left; this time accusing them—and Daniel Berrigan in particular—of anti-Semitism. In so doing he overlooks a lesson which we Jews learned long ago and which might have tempered similar charges made by Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg. The lesson is simply that next to anti-Semitism itself there are few things as dangerous as lightly raising the fear of this specter, which surely does lurk in the netherworld of even the most seemingly democratic societies.

Perhaps a closer look at some of Mr. Novak's bill of particulars will make it clearer who in fact has "veered around to join an ancient Right."

He charges that Berrigan is "a new gnostic" flaunting "the pretense of a non-historical orthodoxy" and demanding that the Jews must not be contaminated by the ambiguities of land, state and politics. Is it not possible to be in fundamental support of the right of the Jewish people to their homeland and yet to raise certain questions about means and fidelity to a tradition? The God of Israel himself (who can hardly be accused of gnosticism) had more than some misgivings over the ambiguities of his people wanting a "king to rule over us, like the other nations" (I Sam. :5). Nor has the adoption of Christianity by the Emperor Constantine and the subsequent identification of the Church with the political aspirations of the State set a happy precedent. Without suggesting a return to theocracies, the whole eighth chapter of I Samuel bears occasional rereading by both Christians and Jews. After all, the real question here is not whether but rather how and where to become incarnate.

Since the word "Zionist" is so loaded with emotion, one might question the wisdom of Daniel Berrigan having used it. However, Mr. Novak should consult further with the Jewish community both here and especially in Israel before writing that "to be a Zionist is now virtually identical with being Jewish." It is, after all, possible to be a Jew and to love Israel, and still question military and expansionist solutions by either side in the Middle East.

Further, it is precisely because Jewish voting patterns have so consistently and decisively reflected a more liberal and humanitarian point of view that the drop to an only 66 percent vote for McGovern is distressing. And all the more so for coming at a time when Richard Nixon was conducting his own pogrom against the people of Indochina. Although I am hardly an apologist for much more serious official Catholic foot-dragging on the war, Mr. Novak might be surprised by the enormous difficulties which the Jewish Peace Fellowship confronted in getting any decisive and substantive efforts on the part of Jewish national organizations on either the draft or the war. Is it really "brutal" to suggest some connection between these attitudes and U.S. military aid to Israel?

Mr. Novak doubts that there exists a "network of conscience" all around the world made up of those united in the same resistance against injustice and violence. He cites Soviet political prisoners as an example of those not in "the same struggle as Daniel Berrigan." It may surprise him to learn that a group of political dissenters I recently met with in Moscow were deeply moved and encouraged by a letter of Dan's in which he criticized the Soviet government. Similarly, many of us are strengthened by the knowledge that there are Jews and Arabs—and good people all over the world—who are seeking alternatives to a worldwide mass culture which chooses violence and repression as its tools of social change.

Indeed it is sharing in the life of this spiritual network which develops a consciousness that transcends one's narrow "ethnic identity" without ignoring one's concrete origins. When Berrigan calls himself "a Jew," he is first of all expressing the most authentic Christian tradition which saw all disciples of Jesus as children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. But it also reflects Merton's idea that "final integration is a state of transcultural maturity . . . no longer limited by the culture in which (one) has grown up." St. Paul was not forgetting his ethnic identity as a Jew from Tarsus when he spoke of "becoming all things to all men."

Being a Jew in this sense and identifying with a long history of persecution and ostracism flows from love not arrogance. Charges of anti-Semitism against Daniel Berrigan strike me as particularly dissonant, since I have always known him as something of a semitophile. I can still hear him saying: "If it weren't for you Jews, we poor Irish Catholics would just dry up and blow away."

Mr. Novak may be correct when he charges that the Catholic left's fascination with "sun-blocking bureaucratic forces and evils in administrative structure" is "all too Catholic" simply because it comes out of a community's experience in resistance to a long war, rejection by much of its church, and, for many, time in prison. It is, nevertheless, somewhat ironic to hear him make light of the left's concern with "armaments . . . power elites, industrial complexes (and) millionaires" from his office in the Rockefeller Foundation during a period which has witnessed a military coup in Chile, Watergate, and an "energy crisis" orchestrated and paid for by the oil corporations, including those owned by the Rockefellers.

As a Jewish refugee from the Nazis I have experienced and challenged much anti-Israeli sentiment within the Church as deriving from Christian anti-Semitism. However, this fact cannot allow Christians to be intimidated into the same kind of silence which has struck the majority of the American

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Jewish community in contrast to their sisters and brothers in Israel. This topic is not a popular one, and people such as Daniel Berrigan will meet with anger from Jews and with coolness from Arabs, as was the case with the audience before which he originally delivered his controversial paper. But when the questions are life and death, the possibility of a nuclear confrontation in the Middle East, and a homeland for refugees, Jewish or Arab, no Christians or Jews calling themselves peacemakers can continue to treat this issue as forbidden ground.

(REV.) PAUL MAYER

Reply

To Rosemary Ruether: In matters of racism, we have learned to go beyond excuses for personal "myopia," for intentions, even for conscious attitudes, and to examine institutional realities. Berrigan's speech exhibited five classic moves of Christian anti-Semitism, and was given at a moment when the survival of Israel was (and is) in question. Whether Berrigan spoke out of myopia or even out of charity is politically irrelevant; the point is not *ad hominem*. Further, since Berrigan is a shepherd to many, his temporary anti-Semitism required its true name, and from a Catholic.

To Edward S. Herman: It is not anti-Semitism to criticize Israel; but in doing so one ought not to use classic anti-Semitism as the structure of one's thought. . . . Israel's survival is not threatened by the Palestinian Arabs within, but by the Arab states without. The rights of the Palestinian Arabs to a separate state and of the Israelis to a separate state are in conflict. Who will invent a solution? What mutuality is possible? The Arab states do not yet accept the existence of Israel and do not yet work for a creative form of Israeli-Palestinian and Israeli-Arab cooperation. Israel's strategy of military invincibility has been shattered; Israel now requires a strategy of respect for Arab culture, of genuine cooperation, of deepening mutual exchange. A form of ethnic pluralism is indispensable.

To Samuel Hazo: The survival of Israel is, for most Jews, no longer the subject of an "—ism." Whatever "Zionism" once meant, the war of Yom Kippur made Israel into a new symbol —the concrete "Zion" rather than the abstract "Zionism." (Witness the article by Irving Howe in *New York* Magazine, after my column appeared.) Jews, I believe, will best adjudicate the symbolic shifts now taking place.

To Father Paul Mayer: McGovern's sixty-six percent of the Jewish vote was a landslide. His campaign from July until November offered many reasons not to vote for him; it is not fair to attribute all disaffection to one issue. . . . When Berrigan called himself a Jew, he did not do so with humility or "transcultural maturity." He did it—his text indicates—to score moral points, to show his superiority. . . . Dostoevsky wrote of a "network of charity" in which I devoutly believe, but not in the ideological form voiced by Berrigan. Dostoevsky's network is deeper than ideology, and in it even ideological antagonists may be brothers—even militarists and pacifists, bomber pilots and draft-resisters.

May I add that my greatest uncertainty about my column was whether Berrigan stood alone, or blazed a trail for the Catholic Left. Many on the left have, in this case, been embarrassed by his pretenses. Few, if any, wholly defend him. But some do indeed follow the leader, even here. MICHAEL NOVAK

THREE books like these can set, if not the spirit soaring, then the mind to musing whether the regional novel is a genre come to roost in Brooklyn, of all places. The borough, the hamlet, Hicksville on the Hudson: I had not thought of New York on an analogy with the Midwest or South before. Genre or not, species and the heroes (how weird a word here) of these novels belong to the type: lush, lapsed Irish-Catholic. Mass-cult *me genuit*, each could say, each author and each book. These writers are crowding middle age, yet in reading them one senses what it may be like when the writer's knowledge of language is by and large oral. God knows we have had enough novels lisping their erudition trippingly on the tongue, reader forever reminded that writer is a reader too; footnotes in the text, as it were, a message to other campus literati. Get out and live, we growl. Go on safari like Hemingway, get waylaid like Wolfe, go public like Mailer. Of course that last admonition gives us another device with which to group these writers: they are cohort, manager and troubadour of the Norman invasion if not conquest. They have the strengths of his weaknesses. Mailer is the kind of autodidact one encounters in faculty lounges; Breslin, Flaherty and Hamill too often write like those

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RALPH McINERNY

The Gift
PETE HAMILL
Random House, $4.95

World Without End, Amen
JIMMY BRESLIN
Viking, $6.95

Fogarty & Co.
JOE FLAHERTY
Coward, McCann, $6.95

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of us who sing the National Anthem without being sure of the words. Hamill's memoir-novel is the most successful of the three; Breslin seems unsure of what he is attempting and thus can scarcely succeed; Flaherty writes like someone paying off a lost election bet.

In *The Gift,* Pete Hamill recalls a Christmas furlough twenty years ago when, just out of Navy bootcamp, he comes home to Brooklyn in a snowstorm. Seventeen and a half, the eldest child, Pete will know the flattening humiliation of confronting the girl who sent him a Dear John and he demands from her an explanation which of course she cannot give. But the story is less of loss than of gain. Pete and his father have never been close. The father, once a famous player in the immigrant soccer league, lost his leg as a young man and has always been a cripple to his son. And a drunk. The true center of the father's life is a saloon across the street called Rattigan's. It is there, at the bar, on Christmas Eve, with Hamill senior singing Irish ballads, that father and son are reconciled. The mother, younger brothers, a sister, on the margins of the narrative, are nonetheless real. The loss of a girl, the gift of reconciliation with his father; that is the story. It is simply told, moving and, finally, puzzling. While it would be insolent to suggest that Hamill have different memories, it is fair to ask why he calls them a novel.

The Gift is not a novel. For one thing, it is scarcely more than twenty thousand words long. Taking novel simply as a merchandising category, a word to be exchanged meaningfully by buyer and seller in bookstores, Hamill's book is not a novel. Random House has done it up in a manner reminiscent of a collection of poems; it is 83 pages in length and this meager text is subdivided into 25 chapters. Perhaps boxed copies are available for a price. If that be caviling, this is not: one reacts to a novel differently than to a memoir. There is the central problem of the relation of Pete Hamill author to Pete Hamill character. Time has elapsed since the events being recalled and their being recalled; this presents problems which are often well handled, but what remains is the cloying almost narcissistic love of author for character. Well, why not? Because it matters. Gibbon's Autobiography invited judgments about himself just because it is autobiography. Gibbon admired Gibbon; Pete Hamill loves Pete Hamill. It is a serious matter to confuse fiction and autobiography, news and the novel, history and special pleading. The reader simply does not know how to assess the sentimentalizing of the father, reconciliation defined as

admission to the ranks of topers, the silly remarks about the Church. (A minor matter in Hamill, anti-Catholicism of a pathetic kind increases in Breslin's book and becomes farcical in Flaherty.) Remarks which would be insulting if referred to Hamill's self or to his family would be legitimate criticism of his book as fiction. Distance from self is desirable in the autobiographical memoir, but it is essential to fiction, which is why, I suppose, writers disguise the self they introduce into their novels, give it another name, free it from the more restrictive truth of history. Pete Hamill loves his father and God bless him for it, but if at seventeen he resented the supposed pointless wealth of the parish church would he not have been critical of a father who was more a resident of Rattigan's than of his own home? Cutting the old man's bar bill seems a more pertinent economic move than grumbling about gold chalices in the church. Hamill should have priced them in a church goods catalog. Now it says a lot for Hamill that the reader finally wants to ignore the confusion engendered by calling the book a novel and to read it as a memoir, as recall, as a loving reshaping of a long-ago Christmas when one was young. So read, *The Gift* is delightful and sad and very Irish.

Breslin's *World Without End, Amen* is a book which, like its hero, has a tendency to fall between stools. The choice of the concluding words of the Lesser Doxology for a title suggests the ambiguities of the book. Why should a paean to the Trinity be chosen to name this story? One suspects that the words are lodged in Breslin's deepest memories but that he has forgotten their context and just plucks them forth, perhaps because they suggest just one damned thing after another, the apparent nihilism of the book, its unconvincing suggestion that nothing makes any sense. Unconvincing because here and there the likable pre-literary Breslin you thought you knew comes irrepressibly through. If Hamill confuses us by becoming a character in *The Gift* one misses Breslin in his, as voice, as sensibility. His protagonist, Dermot Davey, is a brutal boozy sadistic cop, a character who invites at first the disgust and then the disinterest of the reader. Why in the name of God did Breslin think him important enough to occupy the center of a novel? Apparently he had the idea that, if you took a cop who oppresses, beats, even shoots, the citizens he is employed to protect, and put him in the reversal of his situation, make him one of the oppressed, say as a Catholic in Northern Ireland, well . . . Well, what? If we hold Breslin to this theme, the answer to our unfinished question is: nothing. Zero. Dermot Davey will end as he began. Does Breslin want his novel to say that there is nothing to choose between the oppressor and the oppressed? I would have settled for a clear affirmative answer to that. The clarity is not vouchsafed.

Then there is Theme Two. Davey is a father and of course he had one of his own. His father deserted his

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RALPH MCINERNY *is the author of* The Priest *(Harper & Row).*

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mother and went back to Ireland. So the trip to Ireland is a search for his father, for reconciliation. He will meet his father and he will come to understand why the man left and as a result love or hate him for it. Davey meets his father, in a bar, of course, and the one is as inarticulate as the other. If Pete Hamill's reconciliation with his father in Rattigan's is reminiscent of the camaraderie of Van Heflin and Alan Ladd in the fight scene of *Shane,* Dermot Davey and his dad trade silences like Wallace Beery and Jackie Coogan. On his second visit to the bar, Dermot is told this by his father: "You know, once you let one day go, it's a very easy thing to let a hundred days go." And Dermot replies, "I know." That kind of recognition of failure is possible only in a moral universe. Infrequently, in scenes like these, a real novel seems to underlie what we have been given.

Theme Three, I fear, is the one Breslin may think he developed, one I choose to think was foisted on him by some dum-dum unaware of his real powers as a writer. Why not think of the Catholics in Bogside as the niggers of Northern Ireland? Then poor dumb Dermot Davey can be lectured by every bellicose tosspot, Bernadette Devlin and Marxist Mother Machree for the dreadful things he has done to Angela Davis. Now anyone who can seriously entertain the comparison between the Catholics of the Six Counties and the blacks in America is thinking on the level of a television documentary. That such an analogy is facile sometimes troubles even Davey in the sodden recesses of his brain but he is incapable, and Breslin is unwilling, to explore the phoniness of it. Indeed one of the major missed opportunities of the novel is Breslin's failure to develop what is candidly admitted by his guide, namely that the current troubles are in large part television drama. The very way the term Bogside has come to be used is the result of a commentator's error on the telly. His mistake is embraced as truth by the actors. Is Davey duped by those who lead him through the set scenes of a Belfast riot, a political campaign, another riot, the perjured testimony in court? The reader remembers the lies told by cops to New York magistrates. Are the lies of the Irish Catholics the same, different, what? What is Breslin trying to say? Does he know? Did he write this book to find out, and fail?

As has been mentioned, Breslin's strengths as a writer come upon the reader unexpectedly, rising out of a dead prose which seems printed in capital letters. The basic weakness is structural; these seventeen chapters simply do not form a coherent whole. They *say* a lot, but they do not *tell* us anything. Everyone, adult, child, cleric, layman, grandmother, revolutionary speaks a uniform graffiti, a kind of gutter Esperanto. That famous word for copulation functions as verb, noun, adjective, adverb, interjection, not to say ejaculation. It grates on the ear not simply because it is vulgar but because it is implausible. From time to time an effort is made to rise above the wire service level of the prose, but too often—I think because Breslin has lost his voice or is practicing ventriloquism—this leads to such infelicities as the description of Derry "sitting at the foot of a finger of water." And there is the incessant lighting of cigarettes and the endless boozing. On a typical day Dermot Davey consumes twenty-two recorded drinks and the narrative permits the reader to think that not all were counted.

So what are the strengths? The scenes with the father. An episode, recounted with authoritative economy, in which a Catholic garbageman who has spent years hanging on to the back of the truck brings his wife and kids along on the morning when he is to be promoted to driver. They stand on the pavement, waiting for the truck to emerge from the garage, with the proud man at the wheel. But he is passed over in favor of a Protestant much his junior and, when the truck emerges, a shame-faced husband and father clings to the back of it, his face averted. There, without woolly rhetoric and cheapening parallels with the plight of the children of slaves, is tragedy enough for any writer and any reader. Given his instinct for the viscerally significant, Breslin could have made this a novel of a brute's awakening to his humanity and if Davey should later lapse from this awareness, revert to his former self, well, we might weep but we would not be surprised. This is the story Breslin lost by transposing it onto a political level his hero is too dumb to understand and which Breslin as author must therefore handle on a tabloid level. The attempt to write a novel of ideas with a central character whose scarcely evolved brain is anyway numb with booze invited a shambles.

Fogarty & Co. is an embarrassment and it is difficult to take it any more seriously than Joe Flaherty apparently did. It gives us rampant vulgarity, Apeneck Sweeney at the typewriter, a character in Damon Runyon become littérateur. Flaherty has a Howard Cosell feel for English; he is as alliterative as a former Vice President, with sound running away from whatever meaning he might have had in mind. He is pretentious. He does not know the meaning of words he persists in using, e.g. cuckold. And what is one to do with a writer who compares an undesirable square in a game of Monopoly to Gethsemane and the crown of thorns? One recalled Gibbon's agreement with Burke on the irreligion that followed 1789.

The Irish are an honest race, Johnson said. They never speak well of one another. I am sorry to have had to speak so negatively of these three novels. I suggested a sub-genre from them, the saga of the lush lapsed Catholic. These are the wettest stories I have read in a very long time; the reader is not allowed to doubt that booze is the Irish weakness. What rings most hollow in them, though this is a small thing in *The Gift,* is their references to Catholicism. The practices of the faith and its institutions are caricatured and dismissed. But what these stories show is that it was not dogma or worship, mean nuns or pampered priests, who alienated their characters from the Church. It was a fatal taste for liquor or an adolescent attitude toward sex or both. The reader, perceiving this, suspecting that the authors have not, grieves.

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EARTHLY UTOPIA OR ARMAGEDDON?

MARGARET O'BRIEN STEINFELS

Beyond God the Father
MARY DALY
Beacon Press, $8.95

Earthly utopias, in books or in Vermont, are works of the imagination that allow us to fantasize alternative ways of living our lives and organizing the world. You are interested in a society of abundance, restraint, and civility, based on a credit card economy? See Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward*. You are "into" common property, communal life, and connubial freedom? Check out John Humphrey Noyes' Oneida Community. You want a house without a kitchen? Read Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Women and Economics*. But we need not dally in the 19th century; most radical writings of the last decade were excursions into the better way in a different world. And Mary Daly's *Beyond God the Father* is of this genre—Christianity without its stumbling blocks: God, Christ, sin, and salvation. It is a theological fantasy about religion freed from the patriarchal mentality.

Q. The patriarchal mentality—what is it? *A*. It is the outlook that sees all relationships as submissive, ultimately to an authoritarian God the father, and immediately to those dim shades of Him—men.

Q. What does the patriarchal mentality do? *A*. It makes women cringe. It idealizes women in the role of the victim, offering Jesus as a model of the sacrificial scapegoat, and makes of masochistic vices like "sacrificial love, passive acceptance of suffering, humility, meekness etc." virtuous behavior.

Q. What can we do about the patriarchal mentality? *A*. Destroy it. Since the image of God the father is merely the human attempt to describe "ultimate reality" or the divine, the destruction of that image is a legitimate point from which to begin a fantasy that would take us beyond God the father, a fantasy that would enlarge the place of the feminine in religion.

Fantasies liberate the imagination; what emerges often gives a new vision, a new way of seeing and understanding. Not unexpectedly fantasies about our highly imperfect world also liberate feelings of hostility, loathing and the desire to attack not just the immediate object of one's ire, in this case, the patriarchal mentality, but all that it has formed in the past, and touches in the present.

Beyond God the Father, which promises to be a fantasy about liberated men and women toward a truer understanding of the "ultimate reality," intermittently becomes a blind and ignorant assault on the sins and sinners of the past. The earthly utopia is frequently submerged, along with most of our already tenuous religious beliefs and symbols, in a wash of dubious arguments and spurious history. *Beyond God the Father* is, in fact, an unreadable book. Having read it, I find much of it unthinkable, and having thought about it, conclude that many of its positions are untenable. Those able to forage their way through the densest and darkest of prose, with as open a mind as possible and shield and buckler in place, will find themselves confronted by an enraged and furious theologian: Yahweh hath no fury like Mary Daly.

Many readers who make the journey will find a good deal that they agree with and, indeed, have read in other places. Women are oppressed. Mere human efforts to name God, be it God the father or the ground of being, are a kind of blasphemy. The use and abuse of Jesus as a carbon copy model has had its bizarre effects on women—and men. Yet it is not for these familiar complaints that Mary Daly's book was written, will be read, and should be criticized; it is for the distinctive and sweeping claims she makes. She is not a whimpering liberal interested in the reform of Christianity and the integration of women into its power structure. She is a militant feminist in the process of "calling forth" a new religion whose marching song will certainly be "Go Down, Moses." The new religion is to be informed and inspired by the liberating experience of radical feminism; its faith-experience grows out of living in "new time" and "new space" on the margins of patriarchal society; its mission is to call forth "new Be-ing." Liberated women having transcended the basic form of oppression in our society—sexism—are physically and emotionally better prepared than men to rid society of, among other things, its burdensome patriarchal religious system which "oppresses women and corrupts men." This mantle of charismatic leadership is of the same cut and design as that worn by the prophets of other liberation theologies except that instead of capitalism, racism, militarism, etc., sexism is the enemy.

The effort to decimate patriarchal religion, language, and ideas proceeds from fantasy to fantasy—that is, from utopia to absurdity—amid talk of "ovarian insights," "scapegoat syndromes," "sisterhood as antichurch and cosmic covenant," "nonsaint," "methodicide," "Christocide," "bibliolatry," "phallic morality," and "the final cause: the cause of causes," feminism. Man alone does not live by words.

Nor should we, male or female, live by the Word. The big enemy in *Beyond God the Father* is, like father, like son, the former second person of the Blessed Trinity, the little man from Prague, that nefarious scapegoat, Jesus Christ. "The

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idea of a unique male savior may be seen as one more legitimation of male superiority. . . . To put it rather bluntly, I propose that Christianity itself should be castrated by cutting away the products of supermale arrogance: the myths of sin and salvation. . . ."

An earthly utopia or Armageddon? *Beyond God the Father* is a symptom of the madness which comes from resolutely following fantasies and ideas to their final and absurd ends. Ends, in this case, which embody the imperialistic notion that liberation from oppression, of whatever kind, is an experience that must be shared by anyone who wants to maintain their membership in the human race. It leads to those boyish games of whose is bigger, my oppression or yours. It builds a system which categorizes people according to the "saved" and the "damned," the "in" and the "out," the "worthy" and the "unworthy," the "liberated" and the "unliberated." It is as absurd as it is arbitrary. It is patriarchal.

Oppression is a relative condition. While it is right to rejoice with those who are liberated from oppression (even if, as is rarely admitted these days, it is self-oppression) it does not follow that they should become our political, religious, or cultural mentors—radical feminists, ultramontanes, reformed dope addicts and third world revolutionaries, included. It has never been clear why all the twitches one acquires in any liberation process fit one for anything but verdant, green pastures; or, why having found that 'I am as good as anyone else,' I must, therefore, be better than anyone else. Mark Twain once demonstrated how a belief in radical equality could be combined with an abiding skepticism when he snapped back to the anti-Semites of his day, "Jews are members of the human race; worse than that I cannot say of them." We victims of oppression (women, blacks, chicanos, children and, yes, men) can do nothing better than engrave on our pulsating egos the same statement for our own category.

And if the choice between religious leaders becomes a choice between a feminist, theology professor from Boston College and a carpenter's son from Galilee, I say stick with the working class.

Dictionary of the History of Ideas: Studies in Selected Pivotal Ideas

PHILIP P. WIENER, Editor-in-Chief

Scribner's, $35 per Volume, 5 Volumes

JOHN P. SISK

With a reference work of this scope it might be best to begin on a factual level. The editor Philip P. Wiener (who is also editor of the *Journal of the History of Ideas*) has as his editorial board of Isaiah Berlin, George Boas, Salomon Bochner, Felix Gilbert, Frank E. Manuel, Ernest Nagel and René Welek, and as his managing editors Charles E. Pettie and Laurie Sullivan. The 311 articles, all written especially for this occasion, have been contributed by an international company of 253 scholars. The workhorses are René Welek with nine articles and Marjorie Hope Nicolson and S. G. F. Brandon with five each. Twelve of the contributors, including Jacques Choron who is responsible for "Death and Immortality," are now dead. The project was begun in 1967 and will be completed next year with the publication of the index volume. It will therefore have kept pace with Samuel Johnson's great *Dictionary of the English Language* and will have beaten Diderot's *Encyclopédie* by 18 years.

The *Dictionary of the History of Ideas* is a handsome set of books, clearly designed for convenient use. Its encyclopedia-size two-column pages average 950 words, which means that the spacing is generous and the type relatively large. At about 650 pages per volume it is not too bulky to be read comfortably sitting in a chair or propped up in bed. More important, the writing though sometimes only adequate is on the whole very good and quite often excellent. The specialist-contributors have the capacity, indispensable in a work of this sort, to communicate across disciplines, cultures and nations.

Philip Berrigan

Photo: Lawrence Ratzkin

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SIMON AND SCHUSTER

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Alphabetically, the *Dictionary* ranges between Julius Weinberg's "Abstraction in the Formation of Concepts" and Nathan Rotenstreich's "Zeitgeist" as it presents articles of three different sorts: "cross-cultural studies limited to a given century or period, studies that trace an idea from antiquity to later periods, and studies that explicate the meaning of a pervasive idea and its development in the minds of its leading proponents." The topics selected for treatment are drawn from seven domains: The external order of nature as studied in the physical and biological sciences but as present also in common usage, in imaginative literature, myths about nature and metaphysical speculation; human nature in anthropology, psychology, religion and philosophy as well as in literature and common sense; literature and the arts in esthetic theory and historical criticism; history, historiography and historical criticism; economic, legal and political ideas and institutions, ideologies and movements; religious and philosophical ideas; formal mathematical, logical, linguistic and methodological ideas.

Space has been allotted generously. Herbert Butterfield's 30,000-word treatment of "Historiography" is considerably above the average, but articles such as René Welek's "Romanticism in Literature," R. S. Peters' "Behaviorism," Donald F. Lach's "China in Western Thought and Culture," O. A. Patrides' "Hierarchy and Order," Michael Moran's "Metaphysical Imagination," Thomas A Goudge's "Evolutionism" and Merle Curti's "Psychological Theories in American Thought" range upwards from 10,000 words. Each article is followed by a bibliography (it may be as long as that for "Entropy"—three and one half columns, or as short as that for "Zeitgeist" —two and one half inches) and a list of cross-references to other articles in the *Dictionary*. As one might expect, illustrations are the exception rather than the rule, but when they are necessary—for instance, in Francis Lee Utley's "Myth in Biblical Times" and Milton C. Nahm's "Creativity in Art" —they are used generously and effectively.

In his brief preface Professor Wiener calls attention to the *Dictionary's* emphasis on inter-disciplinary and cross-cultural relations and the utility of the cross-references to bring pivotal ideas into clusters that can then be related to other clusters. My own experience is that this inter-relatedness proves itself out wherever one dips into the *Dictionary*. The reader is always at a point of concentration in a cluster of ideas, each one of which not only reinforces the others but has its own capacity to enlarge the cluster. Thus one might begin with the cluster "Alchemy," "Hermeticism," "Astrology," "Gnosticism" and "Neo-Platonism" and in the process be lured on by cross-references to "Pythagorean Harmony of the Universe," "Evil," "Witchcraft," "Eschatology," "Prophecy in the Middle Ages," "Ramism," "Millenarianism," "Romanticism," "Utopia," "Demonology," "Protest Movements," "Anarchism," "Marxism," "Metaphor in Religious Discourse" and "Love." Not that the circle would have been closed at this point, for "Love" is the bridge to "Social Attitudes Towards Women," "Double Truth," "Heresy" and "Sin and Salvation." The *Dictionary*'s clear message is that the world of ideas is a seamless web.

In the final analysis, of course, it is the contributors who are most responsible for the *Dictionary*'s cluster-expanding capacity. Isaiah Berlin's "The Counter Enlightenment" is a superb example. Here the cross-references are to "Enlightenment," "Irrationalism," "Organicism," "Romanticism," "Volkgeist" and "Zeitgeist." But the effectual references in Professor Berlin's long essay range far beyond these into structuralism, conservatism, existentialism, the modern cult of experience and the imperial self, the cultivation of the absurd, the analytic spirit, totalitarianism and fascism—few of which subjects are given separate treatment. Indeed, one might complain that the cross-references too often underestimate the cluster-expanding power of the contributors—though the editors might counter that the reader's perception of this "defect" is itself a sign that the *Dictionary* is having its hoped-for effect.

The *Dictionary* is directed to a wide variety of academic and non-academic readers, but not everything in it is for everybody. I suspect that most literary intellectuals will find, as I did, that they have too little math for subjects like "Entropy" (Max Jammer), "Game Theory" (Oskar Morgenstern) or "Relativity" (Banesh Hoffman), and too little biology to feel comfortable with "Biological Models" (R. C. Lewontin) or "Genetic Continuity" (Bentley Glass), though in the latter it is nice to meet again the Watson-Crick double helix, looking more than ever like a modernistic stairway to the stars. The more or less baffled layman can of course always leave these subjects alone. But if he will pick any one of them and stick with it to the bitter end he will at least discover that it is so treated as to be a proper subject for the *Dictionary*, and that discovery itself will be a cluster-expanding experience.

There is no way for a reference work of this kind to protect itself from a host of objections. For one thing, there will be the absence of subjects particular

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REVIEWERS

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readers expect to find. Why, for example, are there no articles on pastoral and asceticism? Are not fictions important enough in all areas of discourse to merit separate treatment? The editors, of course, know the folly of attempting a history of ideas in which there are no lacunae, and hope that the discovery of them will stimulate further study. In fact, the topics dealt with have a capacity to discover the lacunae for the reader. Thus it was Frederick Ferré on "Metaphor in Religious Discourse" and Lewis A. Coser on "Class" who made me want to see an article on fictions (written perhaps by Frank Kermode).

No doubt the index volume will make it possible to fill in many of the gaps, but it will not appease those who object to particular contributors. René Dubos on "Environment," Mircea Eliade on "Myth in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," Father Walter J. Ong on "Ramus" and E. R. Dodds on "Progress in Classical Antiquity" will probably strike most readers as the naturals for their subjects, but I foresee objections to the choice of Sidney Hook for "Marxism," Denis de Rougemont for "Love" or R. S. Peters for "Behaviorism"—to say nothing of complaints from Chomskyites that their man is not mentioned in "Linguistics" (Henry M. Hoenigswald) even though he is in "Study of Language" (Alver Ellegård). That the *Dictionary* is not untouched by the spirit of the late sixties, when most of it would have been written, is apparent from its treatment of such pivotal ideas as "Revolution," "Academic Freedom," "Protest Movements," "Anarchism" and "Perfectibility of Man." Nevertheless, its scholarship tends to be traditionally solid and even (as in our innocence we used to say) objective. I suspect that it will not please those who saw the New Left take-over of the 1968 Modern Language Association Convention as the prologue to a Great Awakening of Scholarship.

Or put it this way: the *Dictionary* will not please those who would prefer it to be inspired, as was the *Encyclopédie*, by the need to strike for liberation against a corrupt and censorious *ancien régime*. The *Dictionary* is nothing if not historically-minded, whereas the Encyclopedists, as Arthur M. Wilson points out in his *Diderot*, "never developed a philosophy of historical continuity." They could not afford to; the enemy had co-opted the past so that even the famous cross-references had to be used as subtle propagandistic devices. Nor could they afford the respectful scholarly attention to the mythic, the mystic, the legendary, the medieval, the religious and the metaphysical that mark the *Dictionary*.

The thrust of the latter, in other words, is conservative, whatever may be said about the contributors as individuals; unlike the *Encyclopédie*, it will be hard to trace a connection between it and some future political revolution. This is not to say that it is a subtle argument for the status quo, or a preparation against future attacks on the MLA, but that its informing conviction, in the words of its editor, is that the "cumulative acquisition of centuries of work in the arts and sciences constitutes our best insurance against intellectual and cultural bankruptcy." When scholarship ceases, in the interest of whatever pieties, to be conservative in this sense, it starts to become tyrannous. Indeed, the *Dictionary's* capacity to resist cultural and intellectual tyranny, not to speak of bankruptcy, may be more important than its uniqueness as a modern reference work devoted solely to the history of ideas.

Malcolm Lowry

DOUGLAS DAY

Oxford University Press, $10

VIVIAN MERCIER

To be able to write this absorbing biography of Malcolm Lowry at all, Douglas Day had to believe that *Under the Volcano*, at least, is a work of genius. Lowry, he concedes, was not a natural writer—"compulsive, yes, but not natural"—and genius "was something which Lowry had to labor, almost frantically, to attain." But the very definition of genius that Day relies on in this passage stresses "native" —that is, innate—"intellectual power," something that can't be attained since it must be possessed from the start.

After reading *Under the Volcano* carefully at least twice and offering it for analysis by my students in a critical writing class, I reluctantly came to a conclusion similar to Jacques Barzun's in his review of the original edition: "while imitating the tricks of Joyce, Dos Passos and Sterne [Lowry] gives us the mind and heart of Sir Philip Gibbs. His three men and lone woman are desperately dull even when sober, and . . . so is their creator's language. . . . His novel can be recommended only as an anthology held together by earnestness."

Yet even if one believes that Lowry never possessed or "attained" genius, Day's biography manages to give him tragic stature. Lowry's end, like that of Geoffrey Firmin, the protagonist of *Under the Volcano*, contained an ele-

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ment of the accidental. Though Lowry may have committed suicide, the circumstances of his death were ambiguous enough for a verdict of "death by misadventure" at the inquest. Even if he bungled the last act of his personal tragedy, however, just as he bungled almost everything else in his misadventurous life, Lowry at 47 could not be viewed as anything but a man in the grip of fate. His psychiatrists had given him up as a hopeless alcoholic, and at least one of them thought him doomed to kill himself or his devoted second wife or both together.

Had Lowry been uniformly unsuccessful as a writer, one could speak of pathos but not of tragedy: the indispensable irony was supplied by the success of *Under the Volcano*. This terrified him, drove him to drink more and more, and indirectly led to the first of several murderous attacks on his second wife; her share in the novel, as indeed in all his work after they met in 1939, seems to have caused him deep unconscious guilt and resentment that were doubtless intensified by the book's success.

Lowry was a bad novelist in the sense that you and I are bad novelists: anybody self-conscious enough to write a book review or read one, I assume, is always telling himself a story about his own life. It has a beginning, naturally; a middle consisting of what's happening right now; and an end, presumably happy, in the vague future. But suppose something traumatic happens to us, such as divorce or the death of a loved one: suddenly the middle is cut off from the wish-fulfillment ending. We have to go back and retell our story from the beginning. Some will substitute a fantasy for the traumatic experience, leaving the happy ending untouched. Others, governed by the reality principle, will retell their life story so that it leads with some inevitability to the present catastrophe and thence to a more credible future.

You and I do not commit our bad novels to writing, but Lowry spent progressively more and more of his time writing when he wasn't drinking or sleeping. The moment he set out on a journey, long or short, he began to write a story about it, without any clear idea about how the story should end. When the journey was over, he compulsively wrote and rewrote the story at greater and greater length, without ever becoming satisfied that it was finished. As a result, the woman in *Under the Volcano* began as his first wife, Jan Gabrial, but ended by including a good deal of Margerie Bonner, his second. Each book tended at some point to return in a flashback to the beginning of Lowry's experience: his overpowering father, his somehow inadequate mother, his cruel nursemaids, his distaste for his own body—especially his sexual inadequacy—all his many childhood guilts and failures. Toward the end of his life he professed a hope of integrating all these unfinished projects in one enormous work called, appropriately, "The Voyage that Never Ends." Apart from the early novel of his voyage as an 18-year-old merchant marine seaman, *Ultramarine* (1933), Lowry finished only one long work before his death in 1957, *Under the Volcano* (1947). Both the death of its protagonist—prophetic of his own, as we have seen—and that of its heroine, Geoffrey Firmin's estranged wife, may have fulfilled the author's unconscious wishes.

It may appear from what I have written so far that Douglas Day has a totally depressing story to tell, especially as he begins with Lowry's death and goes on to search for the early psychic traumas that may have led up to it. But in fact Lowry struggled against his fate with a good deal of courage. By the time one has come to despair of Lowry as a hero, it is clear that the book can boast of a heroine in Margerie. Besides, Day never loses his sense of humor or his irony:

> Lowry might have needed caring for, being so obviously nearly helpless most of the time; but there were many who were happy to care for him. This was a phenomenon that Lowry discovered early in his life: that the world is full of people eager to become nursemaids to the incompetent, the vulnerable, even the impossible—if only one is *engagingly* incompetent, vulnerable, impossible. Lowry had charm. . . . And, if a drunk can ever be attractive, Lowry can be said to have been so—most of the time.

Lowry was misadventurous in life and continued to be so even after his death, for the man first chosen to be his biographer, Conrad Knickerbocker, committed suicide in 1966. Then Lowry's luck changed, once for all: thanks to Margerie Bonner Lowry, who has performed *sati* like a Hindu widow, showing the "courage to give me [Day] much of my material, and then to leave me alone with it," Lowry has found in his biographer the last, best nursemaid of all. (Illustrations, chronology, bibliography, index and even jacket enhance the value of this invaluable book.)

Those People

COLETTE PETONNET

Greenwood, $11.50

PETER FREIBERG

In recent years, public housing has been the center of a growing debate in the United States. Critics have correctly pointed out how unattractive,

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poorly-designed projects have encouraged crime, fostered residential segregation and frightened away residents from surrounding areas. The fierce resistance by local communities and politicians to the federal government's half-hearted efforts to encourage "scatter site" public housing projects in white neighborhoods and suburbs indicates the depth of middle-class fears about such projects.

On the whole, however, there has been relatively little research into the lives of the people who reside in public housing projects: are they, in fact, "different" from the rest of the population, and if so, why? For this reason alone, *Those People,* by Colette Pétonnet, a researcher at the National Center of Scientific Research in Paris, would be welcome. Despite the vast differences between the French and American milieus, her study of the "subculture" of a public housing project on the outskirts of a large French city has much to offer those in this country concerned about housing for the poor.

The La Halle housing project was built for people living in condemned buildings or crowded rooms in large urban slums. It is in theory a "transitional" project, from which residents are supposed to move when moderate-income housing, which provides better comfort at more rent, becomes available; in practice, the shortage of moderate-income housing makes the stay in La Halle usually permanent.

Physically, La Halle consists of two gray, oblong four-story buildings that look like "two long rows of similar attached cells." An hour away by bus from the city and 15 minutes walking distance from town, the project gives the impression of being "a blind alley at the end of the inhabited world." La Halle's 167 families are mostly Arabs, North African Jews and underprivileged French who are intensely disliked in the town: teachers and government employees refer to them as "those people" and misfits, tradesmen exploit their ignorance, cafe owners refuse the youths admittance and police refer to La Halle as the "souses' project."

Given their common poverty that has forced them to accept "public charity," subject to quick eviction, treated with the same scorn by outsiders, the residents have no choice but to recognize themselves as the group they form in relation to the outside world. Nor is it surprising that this rejection leads to continual acts of aggression against outsiders: stealing, vandalism, sometimes violence. As William F. Whyte points out in his foreword, the residents know that they have been marked as "people who are struggling to hold their own and not going anywhere."

At the same time, Pétonnet finds that common living conditions have sharply reduced ethnic differences and conflict. The project is, in a sense, like one big family. Most of the residents are unskilled workers. Many come from broken homes and themselves have been married more than once. Alcoholism is prevalent among half the adult population. The solidarity of living together, in the author's view, helps produce similar values. School, for example, is viewed by everyone simply as a place one goes to until one has learned to read and write. Outsiders with whom the project residents interact —social service workers, police, housing officials—are viewed with well-founded suspicion. There is almost complete alienation from the political process.

There is little to relieve the grim portrait of life in La Halle. True, residents enjoy periodic celebrations, which they define as eating and drinking a lot, teasing each other and even exchanging wives; but when the celebration is over there is little to do but wait for the next one. True, the people are capable of showing great warmth at times, but lasting personal relationships with neighbors are rare. Taken up with material problems, they are too concerned with surviving from day to day to be able to build a future.

Pétonnet describes in detail many aspects of the lives of La Halle residents, ranging from their menus to how they spend their television-viewing time. Unfortunately, the book's dry, academic style prevents it from having the impact of several other "culture of poverty" books, such as Oscar Lewis' *The Children of Sanchez;* it would have been far more interesting if the personal stories told by three project residents had been integrated into the text—along with other individual testimony—instead of in the appendix.

It also would have been instructive to know something of the author's experiences in gathering her information. We are told in a preface that she used participant-observer techniques, but no details are given to enable the reader to evaluate how her own involvement might have influenced the responses of the residents.

Nevertheless, Pétonnet does convey a feeling of people whose human potential is stifled by their environment. She leaves open, as Whyte points out, the question of whether the residents' "subculture" is due to their poverty or their circumstances as poor people living in a large public housing project. But in proposing a hypothesis for further study, she suggests a partial answer. Because of the bureaucratic and psychological burdens inflicted on La Halle residents simply by being there, the project may be compared to a prison. If this is true, Pétonnet asks, "Would not this environment of prison-like propensities be strongly inclined to make the people of La Halle into a delinquent community?"

It is a question that must be asked —and answered—in this country if the public housing program is to become a force for good for both residents and communities.

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 427)

taining in all but the binding the original format, contents, and quality of the hardcover edition. We hope this will enable an even larger audience to obtain copies of this valuable and important book.

ELISABETH SIFTON
Senior Editor
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